

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----075828 101832Z /42

O R 130056Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0559  
INFO USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
AMEMBASSY LISBON  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG  
AMEMBASSY OSLO  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
AMEMBASSY ROME

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EXDIS

5. THE CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE HAS BEEN CONFUSED BY AN ALMOST AUTOMATIC ASSUMPTION THAT IF THE NEUTRON WEAPON IS PRODUCED, IT WILL BE STATIONED IN THE FRG, AND IS BECLOUDED BY THE KIND OF OUTBURSTS EXEMPLIFIED BY EGON BAHR. THERE NOW IS A TREND, AT LEAST AMONG SOME COMMENTATORS, TO EXAMINE THE ISSUE IN RATIONAL TERMS, BUT IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE MAJORITY OF GERMANS CONTINUE TO REACT TO IT EMOTIONALLY.

FRG GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES  
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6. LEADING MEMBERS OF THE SPD/FDP COALITION, INCLUDING THE CHANCELLOR, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, AND THE DEFENSE MINISTER, HAVE MOVED QUICKLY TO TRY TO CALM PUBLIC CONTROVERSY ON THE ISSUE. THEIR TASK HAS NOT BEEN MADE EASIER, TO BE SURE, BY THE TWO ARTICLES BY EGON BAHR, WHICH HAVE STIMULATED SOME SPECULATION THAT THE SPD AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD OPPOSE DEPLOYMENT OF THE NUCLEAR WARHEAD IN GERMANY. SENIOR OFFICIALS IN THE CHANCELLERY HAVE IMPLIED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE.

7. STATE SECRETARY SCHUELER TOLD THE AMBASSADOR IN LATE JULY THAT, WHILE BAHR'S PURPOSE HAD BEEN TO CHANNEL THE DISCUSSION OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPON IN A WAY THAT WOULD AVOID FRESH CONTROVERSY ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN GENERAL, THE CHANCELLOR HAD NONETHELESS BEEN ANGERED BY THE ARTICLES. MORE RECENTLY, MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI COMMENTED TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT BAHR HAD "OVER-EMOTIONALIZED" THE ISSUE AND THAT HE -- WISCHNEWSKI -- WOULD DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH BAHR WHEN THE LATTER RETURNED FROM VACATION.

8. IN THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THE ISSUE, SCHMIDT, GENSCHER AND LEBER HAVE HAD THREE MAIN OBJECTIVES:

-- TO DISABUSE THE PUBLIC OF THE NOTION, FOSTERED BY PRESS COMMENTARY, THAT THE DECISION ANNOUNCED BY THE PRESIDENT IN JULY REPRESENTED A FAILURE OF THE US TO CONSULT WITH ITS ALLIES ON MATTERS AFFECTING THEIR SECURITY;

-- TO ASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT FULL CONSULTATIONS  
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WOULD TAKE PLACE BEFORE ANY DECISIONS ON DEPLOYMENT IN GERMANY WERE MADE AND THAT THE FRG WOULD HAVE A FULL VOICE IN THOSE DECISIONS; AND

-- ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MATTER, TO ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THE ER WARHEAD AND PLACE IT IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE, THUS COUNTERING THE MORE ALARMIST CLAIMS SUCH AS THOSE MADE BY BAHR.

9. THESE STATEMENTS HAVE REVEALED NO OFFICIAL FRG POSITION ON THE ULTIMATE DESIRABILITY OF DEPLOYING NEUTRON WEAPONS IN GERMANY. INDEED, WE ASSUME THAT THAT ISSUE HAS NOT YET BEEN FULLY EXAMINED AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL, INASMUCH AS ANY DECISION WOULD BE PREMATURE BEFORE THE US HAD MADE ITS OWN DECISION ON PRODUCTION AND BEFORE THERE HAD BEEN FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITHIN NATO.

10. CERTAINLY NOTHING THAT HAS BEEN SAID BY CABINET LEVEL OFFICIALS WOULD EXCLUDE A DECISION IN FAVOR OF DEPLOYMENT, BUT ATTITUDES WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE AFFECTED BY PUBLIC OPINION AND ALSO BY THE FORTHCOMING DISCUSSIONS IN THE BUNDESTAG. THE FIRST DEBATE IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE ON SEPTEMBER 6 AND 7 WITHIN THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, AT WHICH TIME WE ARE TOLD THAT BOTH LEBER AND GENERAL HARALD WUST (EQUIVALENT TO CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF) WILL TESTIFY ON THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE.

11. BELOW CABINET LEVEL, SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE FMOD

APPARENTLY UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT THE RATIONALE FOR  
DEPLOYMENT OF NEUTRON WARHEADS. AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN  
DIE WELT ON JULY 27, WHICH WE ARE RELIABLY TOLD WAS BASED  
ON AN FMOD BACKGROUNDER, NOTED THAT FLEXIBLE RESPONSE AS  
ADOPTED BY MC 14/3 REQUIRED THEATER NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
WHICH WOULD BE EMPLOYABLE IN COMBAT AND SUGGESTED THAT  
PRESENT WEAPONS WERE INADEQUATE FOR THAT PURPOSE  
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BECAUSE OF COLLATERAL DAMAGE TO CIVILIAN POPULATIONS.  
THE ARGUMENT WAS DEVELOPED THAT THE NEUTRON WARHEAD

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----075863 101835Z /53

O R 130056Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0560  
INFO USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
AMEMBASSY ROME

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WOULD MORE PRECISELY MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF FLEXIBLE  
RESPONSE, AND WITHOUT LOWERING THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD.  
TO THE EXTENT, THEN THAT WE HAVE INDICATIONS OF AN  
OFFICIAL GERMAN POSITION, IT WOULD BE ON THE SIDE OF  
FAVORING DEPLOYMENT.

CONCLUSIONS

12. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, WE DRAW SEVERAL  
CONCLUSIONS:

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-- A US DECISION TO PRODUCE THE WEAPON, AND A  
SUBSEQUENT ONE TO STATION IT IN THE FRG, WILL PRODUCE  
NEGATIVE PUBLIC REACTION IN THE FRG.

-- THE OFFICIAL ATTITUDE OF THE FRG CANNOT BE  
PREDICTED WITH CERTAINTY, BOTH BECAUSE THE ISSUE HAS  
NOT BEEN CONSIDERED IN FINITE TERMS AND BECAUSE OF  
GOVERNMENT UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHAT THE PUBLIC WILL ACCEPT.

-- AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF A US DECISION TO PROCEED  
WITH PRODUCTION OF THE WEAPON -- WHICH WOULD  
CARRY WITH IT THE IMPLICATION THAT IT WAS TO BE DEPLOYED  
IN GERMANY -- WOULD CREATE A FRESH FUROR HERE UNLESS THE  
GOVERNMENT, HAVING BEEN BROUGHT ON BOARD THROUGH ADVANCE  
CONSULTATIONS, WERE ABLE TO MAKE PARALLEL EXPLANATORY  
STATEMENTS. A UNILATERAL US ANNOUNCEMENT IMMEDIATELY  
BEFORE THE EARLY SEPTEMBER BUNDESTAG HEARINGS WOULD  
COMPLICATE LEBER'S EFFORTS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE IN  
FACTUAL AND UNEMOTIONAL TERMS.

13. WE THUS FULLY SUPPORT USNATO'S RECOMMENDATIONS IN  
REFTEL (B) FOR PROVIDING THE ALLIES WITH FACTUAL AND  
BALANCED INFORMATION TO ASSIST THEM IN DEALING WITH  
THEIR PARLIAMENTS AND PUBLICS AND FOR ADVANCE  
CONSULTATIONS ON OUR DECISIONS CONCERNING PRODUCTION  
AND DEPLOYMENT. THE TASK BEFORE THE FRG OF EXPLAINING  
WHY THE STATIONING OF NEUTRON WARHEADS ON GERMAN  
TERRITORY WOULD ENHANCE FRG SECURITY AND MAKE  
DETERRENCE MORE CREDIBLE IS A DIFFICULT ONE AT BEST.  
WHATEVER STEPS WE CAN TAKE TO FACILITATE THE EFFORTS  
OF THE GERMAN LEADERSHIP WILL WORK TO OUR OWN  
ADVANTAGE AS WELL. CONVERSELY, MOVING AHEAD WITHOUT  
MAKING CERTAIN, THROUGH ADEQUATE CONSULTATIONS, THAT THE  
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GERMAN LEADERSHIP IS IN STEP WITH US WILL VASTLY  
COMPLICATE OUR OWN EFFORTS.  
STOESSEL

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## Message Attributes

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